

# ZONING IT IN



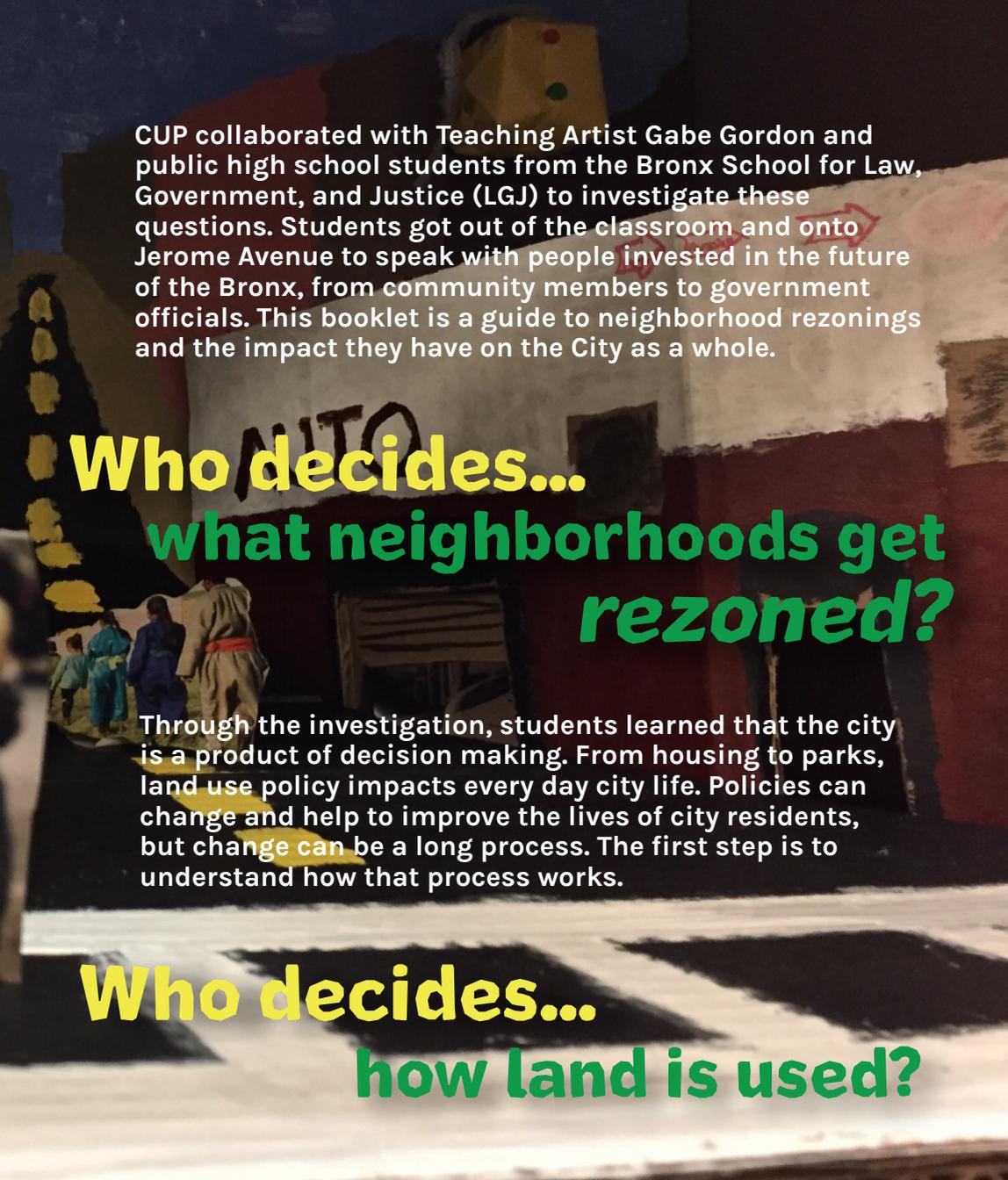
Why do neighborhoods get rezoned?

# What's happening on Jerome Avenue?

In 2016, Mayor de Blasio announced that a 73-block stretch of Jerome Avenue in the Bronx had the potential for change. This area, which runs beneath the 4 train, is currently home to auto shops, commercial stores, and manufacturing. The City's plan would transform, or rezone, this area with new developments and affordable housing on Jerome Avenue.

In response, local voices have raised questions about the impact of the proposed changes on the future of the neighborhood. The conversation surrounding Jerome Avenue has led the community to ask: *Why do neighborhoods change? Who decides if a neighborhood gets rezoned? How can the community have a voice in this process?*



The background is a vibrant, abstract painting. It features a building facade with various colors like red, white, and yellow. There are several figures in the scene, some in traditional-looking clothing. The word 'AUTO' is written in large, black, block letters on the building. A red arrow points to the right in the upper right quadrant. The overall style is expressive and artistic.

CUP collaborated with Teaching Artist Gabe Gordon and public high school students from the Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice (LGJ) to investigate these questions. Students got out of the classroom and onto Jerome Avenue to speak with people invested in the future of the Bronx, from community members to government officials. This booklet is a guide to neighborhood rezonings and the impact they have on the City as a whole.

**Who decides...**

**what neighborhoods get rezoned?**

Through the investigation, students learned that the city is a product of decision making. From housing to parks, land use policy impacts every day city life. Policies can change and help to improve the lives of city residents, but change can be a long process. The first step is to understand how that process works.

**Who decides...**

**how land is used?**

# Getting in the Zone

## ZONING NEW YORK

New York City has three major zoning categories:

**RESIDENTIAL (R)**  
**COMMERCIAL (C)**  
**MANUFACTURING (M)**

Each of these categories comes with their own set of rules about how land can be used and what can be built on it.



"Zoning is just a tool we use to shape the future of neighborhoods, but certainly it is a powerful one."

-Michael Parkinson, Manager,  
Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan,  
Department of City Planning - Bronx Office

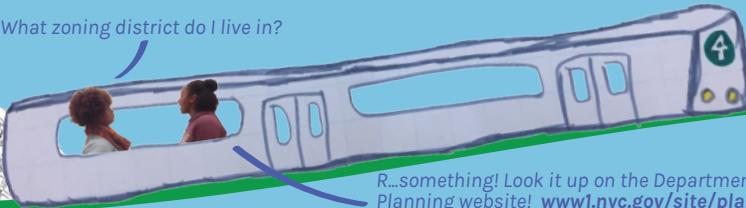
The Department of City Planning (DCP) oversees land use and zoning. The DCP collaborates with other government agencies and communities to meet their mission: **to plan for the future of New York City.**

New York City's *Zoning Resolution*, a legal document on land use, was first created in 1916.

**R7 Districts:** A residential zone like the apartment buildings on the Bronx's Grand Concourse.



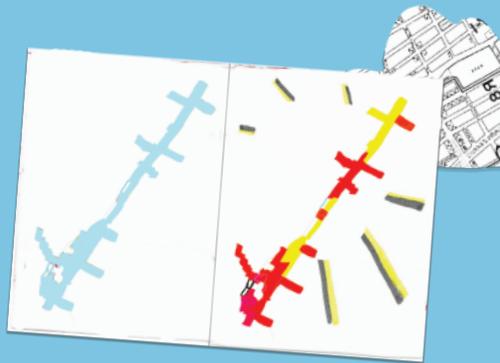
What zoning district do I live in?



R...something! Look it up on the Department of City Planning website! [www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/index-map.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/index-map.page)

## REZONING NEW YORK

To change what is allowed to be built in New York requires a **REZONING**. Jerome Avenue could change from **COMMERCIAL** and **MANUFACTURING** to **RESIDENTIAL**. This would remove the current auto industry plus other businesses and replace them with housing.



"We are proposing to change zoning along Jerome Avenue, really hoping that folks will take advantage of new zoning and build residential development."

-Michael Parkinson



## UP or DOWN?

Rezoning can take different forms. **UPZONINGS** promote growth and often mean the construction of larger buildings. **DOWNZONINGS** put a cap on growth, and prevent the construction of larger buildings in a neighborhood.



# The Rezoning Process

"As the DCP, we can propose zoning changes but just because we propose a zoning change doesn't mean that it'll happen. Ultimately, the **Community Boards**, the **Borough President**, the **Planning Commission**, and finally the **City Council**, they will be the ones to decide whether or not a zoning change will or will not happen." -Michael Parkinson

1. A city agency, a developer, or a community **REQUEST** a neighborhood rezoning.
2. The DCP collects information about what changes will be made and how. Through **OUTREACH**, the City collects **FEEDBACK** from the community.

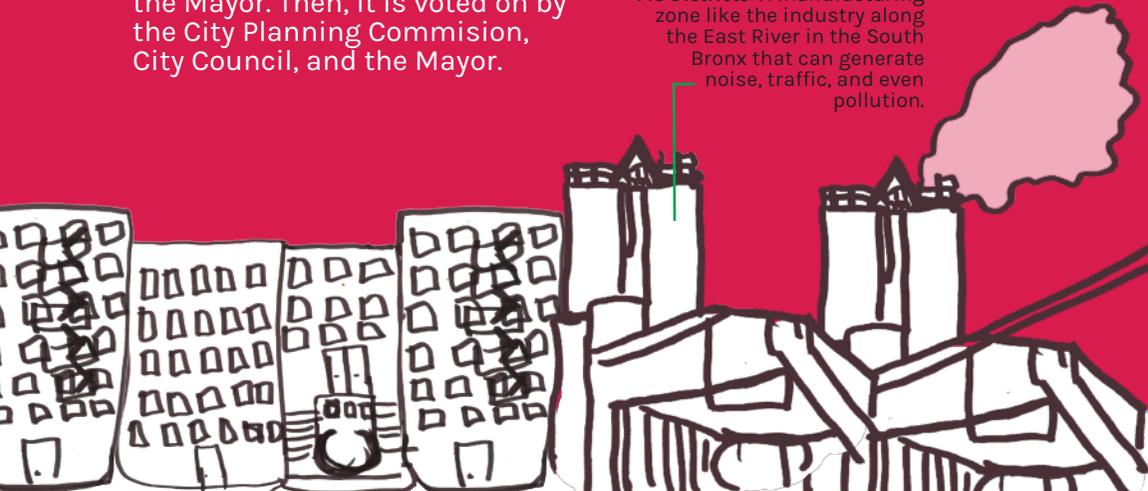




- 3.** The DCP creates a **PROPOSAL** for the rezoning.
- 4.** The city conducts an **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**, to analyze the potential impact of the rezoning proposal.
- 5.** The **UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE (ULURP)** begins when the proposed rezoning application is complete. The application is publically reviewed by the Community Board, Borough President, City Planning Commission, City Council, and the Mayor. Then, it is voted on by the City Planning Commission, City Council, and the Mayor.

Step 4 was completed for Jerome Avenue in September 2016 but the community still has questions about the rezoning plan. **Who will the new housing be for and who will build it? How will this impact local industry? What will the rezoning actually look like?**

**M3 Districts:** A manufacturing zone like the industry along the East River in the South Bronx that can generate noise, traffic, and even pollution.



# Voices & Visions

## for Jerome Avenue



THE  
BRONX

"There's a lot of demand [for affordable housing] and not enough supply, so one of the ways we try to meet that demand is by constructing new housing. Changing the zoning is just one of those tools."

-Michael Parkinson, Manager,  
Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan,  
Department of City Planning  
-Bronx Office



HARLEM RIVER



"Folks have lived here through many iterations of the Bronx ... burning ... divestment ... and now we are seeing the upswing of gentrification ... Through that, there is a long spirit of social justice resiliency."

-Anna Burnham, Lead Community Organizer,  
Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association



"I'm a strong advocate for the automotive community, and they advocate for the community as a whole. Not just for the businesses, but for the community."

-Pedro Estevez, President and Founder,  
United Auto Merchants Association



"This is a battleground, not just for the Bronx, but the future of the City. It's a real turning point ... a moment in time that will determine what happens for the next generation. The next few generations."

-Susanna Blankley, Director of Housing Organizing, Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA)



"We're talking about new school seats, better transit in our district. About better lighting, public safety, quality of life, access to health and wellness... This is a plan that we have to look at in a larger picture. Everything flows from housing. But we have to care about everything else."

-Vanessa Gibson, New York City Council Member, District 15 at New Settlement Community Center, March 2, 2017



# How will rezoning impact local business?

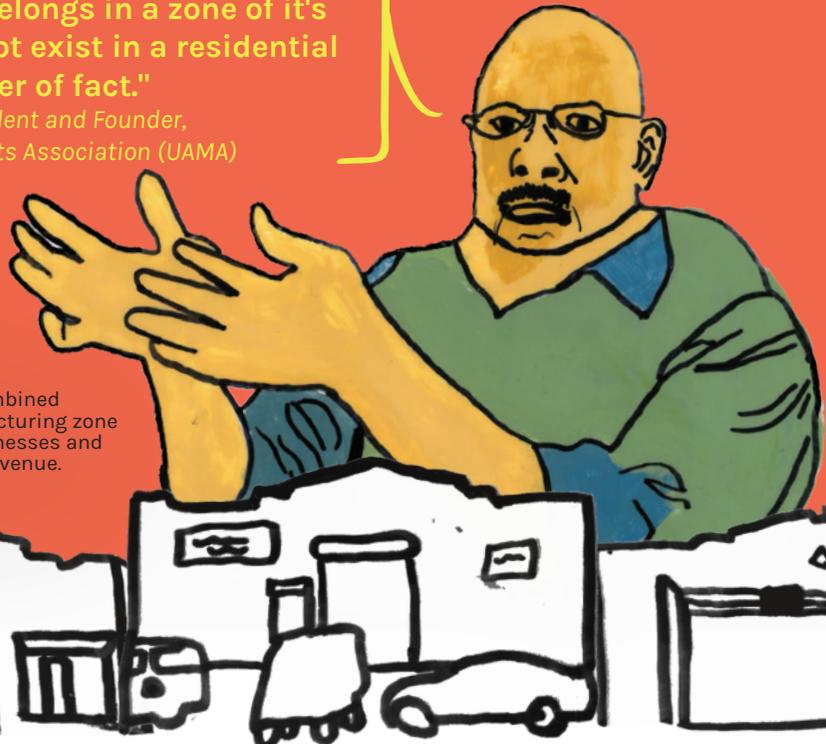
"Commercial needs residential around them. Residential means the traffic of clients. But that's for certain businesses that don't require the same licenses as others: barbershop, pharmacy, a grocery store, a nail salon. Those are businesses that could be enclaves within the community. They don't need special zoning like the auto industry. Auto industry belongs in a zone of it's own. They cannot exist in a residential area. It's a matter of fact."

-Pedro Estevez, President and Founder,  
United Auto Merchants Association (UAMA)

While the rezoning aims to create new space for people to live and work, it will change the current community that live, work, and run businesses in the neighborhood.



**C8 and M1 Districts:** A combined commercial and manufacturing zone like the automotive businesses and repair shops on Jerome Avenue.



**COMPLIANCE** is knowing "the regulations, rules, permits, and the licenses that you need" (Pedro Estevez) to operate. Rezoning Jerome Avenue would mean current businesses would be operating illegally.



The **Commercial and Auto Repair Stability Act (CARS)** is a bill proposed by UAMA and City Council Member Vanessa Gibson that will help businesses with compliance during a rezoning.

"Other businesses are going to thrive because of the traffic of new people. However, the businesses that may be leaving are not accustomed to the new people coming. They might not like the way that you do haircuts because you don't know how to do the new culture's style. The way that you have your grocery store is not their style. They're going to go to another store. Which store? New stores that they're going to come along and put in ... Little by little they're pushing you and then what happens? You go out."

-Pedro Estevez



# How will rezoning impact housing?

**MANDATORY INCLUSIONARY HOUSING (MIH)** is a city law that requires a part of all new housing to be affordable. What exactly does affordable mean? Who can afford affordable housing? How will it impact people that currently live in the community?

"People need that housing here to move into, right now, and if that housing isn't for neighborhood residents, then what that means is pressure on current residents is going to increase in their current housing. But not only that, higher income tenants are going to bring in different services the folks who live here now are not going to be able to afford. So, we have many ways of pushing people out."

-Susanna Blankley,  
Director of Housing Organizing, CASA



# What does the community want?

## **DEEP AFFORDABILITY**

"The best city subsidies don't meet the needs of local residents. The city needs a whole new model. We have a model for them."

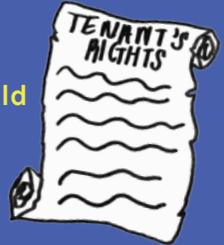
## **WORKER SAFETY & LOCAL HIRE**

will help keep sustainable jobs for local residents. "It has to do with jobs, it has to do with safety, it has to do with infrastructural inequality."



**CERTIFICATE OF NO HARASSMENT** "will limit landlord's ability to make renovation and construction if they have a history of harassing tenants."

**RIGHT TO COUNCIL** is "legislation that would make it a right for all tenants to have an attorney in housing court."



-Susanna Blankley

"We aren't saying no to investment, we aren't saying no to neighborhood changes. We are saying we want the change to be for us, and with us."

-Susanna Blankley

R3 and R4 Districts: A residential zone for one or two family homes.



# What does development look like?

The term development can mean different things to different people. It can mean the actual construction of buildings. It can mean strengthening a community. It can also refer to individual human growth. *How do these definitions influence each other?*

"When we do development, it's hearing what people say their problems are and then organizing to service that need. Not inventing needs for problems that don't exist. When we hear development, we're talking about individual human development. We also develop housing."

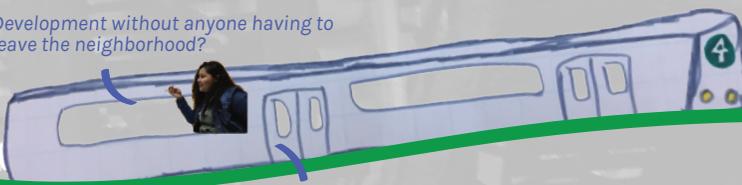
-Anna Burnham,  
Lead Community Organizer, Banana Kelly  
Community Improvement Association



**C1-2 Overlays:** A commercial zone within a residential zone, like a deli for neighborhood residents.



Development without anyone having to leave the neighborhood?



How do we do that?



"There's a group of people that see housing as a way to make money: developers, landlords, speculative capitalists, banks. And then you have the rest of us that just need a place to live. And those two things will always be in conflict."

-Anna Burnham

"Planning as an institution is oftentimes viewed as a very top-down institution: a bunch of technocrats in their ivory towers look at a map and say 'We're going to fix that place.' Unfortunately, I think that really is some of the history there. Under this administration we really do try to flip that paradigm. We try to make sure we're always accountable for the community perspective, because nobody knows their neighborhood more than the folks that live there and it would be arrogant to think otherwise."

-Michael Parkinson

**THE FUTURE** of Jerome Avenue can be a balance between the development and growth of a neighborhood with the strengthening and preservation of the community that remains.





"When we get to ULURP and we are not at the point where we're able to support this particular plan in its current form, then absolutely I will support delaying ULURP. I want to delay this project as much as I can because I want to get it right. I don't want to make any mistakes, I don't want to leave anyone out."

-Vanessa Gibson, New York City Council Member, District 15 at New Settlement Community Center, March 2, 2017

"We have to continue making some noise, making a reasonable case, presenting strategies that make sense, showing a financial plan that works, and getting the City engaged to subsidize."

-Fernando Cabrera, New York City Council Member, District 14 at New Settlement Community Center, March 2, 2017



# How can I get involved?

**MAKE SOME NOISE** by talking to your neighbors about their vision for the community, teach them about the rezoning process, and voice your opinions at Community Board meetings.

**COMMUNITY BOARDS** are the City's advisory groups on issues. They meet every month and are open to the public. Find your Community Board at [nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/cb.shtml](http://nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/cb.shtml).

**GET ORGANIZED** by joining community groups and associations that are working on issues that you are passionate about.

**BRONX COALITION FOR A COMMUNITY VISION** is a coalition of tenant advocacy groups, faith leaders, auto workers, union organizers, and community members campaigning for the participatory rezoning of Jerome Avenue. Get involved at [bronxcommunityvision.org](http://bronxcommunityvision.org).

"Being educated, informed and loud...take the role of making sure that people that may not know these things know them, and know them from you. And you become the imparter of knowledge."

-Anna Burnham





"I used to travel through Jerome not thinking much of it. All I saw was auto body shops and fast food places... I never really thought it could be more than that. I hope affordable housing happens but only if the people who are losing business are helped financially."

-Marcuz Xavier, Bronx resident, LGJ student

"My vision for Jerome: I expect it to look very family friendly. I expect there to be more homes for people and more buildings."

-Nia Brooks, Bronx resident, LGJ student





"I want Jerome Avenue to be affordable. I want the people to feel good and feel safe about the community they live in."

*Kelly Mendez*  
-Kelly Mendez, Bronx resident, LGJ student



"I would like for the Jerome project to have an end result that encompasses the ideas of the people. It should be something that the people approve rather than an idea that only regards the wishes of the government."

*Amanda Derrell*, Bronx resident, LGJ student

## The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)

is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

This project is one of CUP's *Urban Investigations* – project-based after-school programs in which high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP and Teaching Artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the fields of arts and social justice. To learn more about CUP, visit [welcometoCUP.org](http://welcometoCUP.org).

**The Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice (LGJ)** combines law-related studies with real-world learning experiences for students in grades 6-12. The school has its own mock courtroom and crime and forensic labs, and uses the New Bronx Criminal Court Complex as an extended classroom. Students explore careers in law and government through coursework, mentoring relationships, and internships while preparing for the challenges of college. To learn more, visit [bronxlgj.org](http://bronxlgj.org).

## CUP

**Teaching Artist:** Gabe Gordon  
**Project Lead:** Jenn Anne Williams  
**Project Support:** Christy Herbes, Christine Gaspar

## LGJ

**Principal:** Johanie Hernandez  
**Director of Corporate and Community Partnerships:** Kimberly Felder  
**Students:** Nia Brooks, Amanda Derrell, Kelly Mendez, Marcus Xavier  
**With assistance from:** Caroline Coss, Amir Daily, William Duah, Fernando Tavaréz

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